

City of Flagstaff Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Organizational Master Plan Update

Focus Groups – Nov. 1, 2010

On November 1, 2010, the City of Flagstaff Parks & Recreation and Community Enrichment Services Departments hosted a series of focus groups at the Thorpe Park Community & Senior Center to begin discussions with city stakeholders regarding the current effort to update the city's Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Organizational Master Plan. The purpose of the focus groups was to listen to residents who use Parks & Recreation facilities and programs to ensure that the plan is responsive to community needs.

Throughout the day, six separate focus groups were conducted with a total of 81 participants signing-in, including approximately 36 city staff members. However, a number of participants, city staff members in particular, attended more than one focus group. Therefore, the total number of individual participants was approximately 62, including approximately 27 city staff members.

Elizabeth Neumayer, Director of the Flagstaff Community Enrichment Services Department and Project Manager for the Organizational Master Plan Update project, began each session with an introduction to the project and the needs it is intended to address. Leslie Dornfeld, the lead consultant working with the City on the Organizational Master Plan Update, then offered more details on the project and introduced the purpose of the focus groups. Also in attendance were Ken Ballard of Ballard*King, and Ximena Zamora of AECOM, additional consultants working on the plan update. Dexter Albert, with Intrinsic Consulting, facilitated the focus groups, and Jason Hurd, also of Intrinsic, recorded comments.

The questions following this paragraph were used to guide the focus groups. However, the discussions remained flexible and questions were not necessarily fielded one at a time, which provided a conversational atmosphere. During the focus groups, the facilitator ensured that each participant was given the opportunity to make comments or ask questions of the project team. Also, while the schedule of the six focus groups was originally arranged by topic, participants were encouraged to attend whichever group best fit their schedule and often several topics were covered in a single group.

1. What is the function of your group and how do you use Parks and Recreation/Community Enrichment Department services and programs?
2. Overall, are the needs of your entity/organization being met by the City Parks and Recreation/Community Enrichment Services facilities and programs?
 - a. How or why not?
3. What do the City Parks and Recreation/Community Enrichment Services Departments do well?

4. How do you think that the City Parks and Recreation/Community Enrichment Services could do better?
5. What types of partnerships or strategies do you think could be used to provide the services/programs that you want?
6. What types of fees should/could the Department charge for Parks and recreation services? Could it increase its fees? What other ways do you think the Department could increase its revenues?
7. What else should we be aware of/consider/address as we develop this plan?
8. Who is missing from this discussion?
9. Are you willing to help distribute the survey when it is available?

Following are the comments and questions, along with project team responses, that were recorded during each focus group.

General Parks and Recreation – 8-9:45 a.m. (13 signed in)

Funding

- The departments need sufficient funding to maintain services.

Information/Awareness

- Not enough information gets to seniors about activities and programs.
- I would like to see more advertising about all that Recreation has to offer. Most people don't know what we have to offer.
- Cityscape, other contractors may agree, has become unhelpful for me – I set my tennis schedules based on Cityscape, but it always comes out late and often with the wrong information. I've had numerous people who had to leave the tennis court during a lesson, they don't realize the city has a tennis program even after calling the city and being told there is no city tennis program.
- This is what I was saying about marketing and publications. If staff doesn't know about the programs offered by the city, how can the public know?

Facilities

- We have great disc golf facilities and need to continue having them.
- Want to make sure ice rink is good to go and can make improvements.
- We're very excited about ice rink getting back up and running. We're having all users clean up after themselves. The grand opening was fantastic with about 200 people on the ice.
 - Do you have a system to contract out lessons?

- City staff does all the lessons except for hockey. We have a figure skating club and Flagstaff youth hockey Assn. and NAU and high school hockey and amateur adult hockey. We would like a second sheet of ice. The users are increasing in numbers. Scheduling is a little tight now.
 - Is the rink self-sustaining?
 - 63% - it is very good.
- Representing senior citizens, they are not always in position to be employed or speak up at meetings. I use the recreation center as personal health enrichment. I use the facilities to stay healthy. Not enough people use the facilities.
- As the coordinator at Aquaplex, I represent the users. Since we were designed for multi-generations, we have broad user demographics. A lot of people use it because it is affordable. P&R does good job of serving the youth – a lot of kids use the pool. Our biggest complaint is that the Aquaplex does not meet demands of swimmers. Competitive facilities are non-existent. The needs of youth are being met at the Aquaplex.
 - Where do swimmers go now?
 - Flagstaff high school – P&R use to maintain, but now it is the school district's primarily due to funding issues.
- Facilities need to be ADA accessible (they all are).
- Through the regional plan process we have heard a lot from the community. People say they need more soccer parks. Where can we have multi-uses? An indoor soccer park could be used for other things. Route 66 and Fourth Street are looking to grow into multi-use venues. If we get a garage downtown sometime, think about the roof structure – can it be used for other things?
- I coach little league and high school. We don't have enough practice facilities for baseball. Flag Rec center is the only public facility with a wood basketball court and it can be complicated getting practice time. Flagstaff has no batting cages. We have tons of softball and little league players that could use one. That could be a revenue generator also.
- Disc golf is huge here. San Diego has one course. We have two city courses at Thorpe and McPherson Parks, an NAU course and one at snow bowl. The city has given us 18 baskets and polls, and that's it. We host tournaments every year here. We have hosted professional competitions in 2003 and an amateur one in 2005 – these are worldwide events. Disc golf is great for open space, keeping green, and has minimal impacts. We've had ideas about redesigning courses, such as Thorpe. There is still a lot of space that could be used for disc golf. A lot of the work is volunteered by club members. We want to explore gaining more space and grow our courses into championship courses and bring back the world championships. The courses are always packed in the summer so we might need another course. We can include recycling and put wood chips down. The courses need to be cleaned more too. Courses are open and self-managed in terms of

daily use. None of the courses require payment. They are minimal maintenance with some tree trimming, cleaning, etc. NAU does its own maintenance.

- What can't the clubs handle that is necessary?
 - Biggest thing is maintenance and up keeping current courses.
- What about putting one out at Tuthill? Look at partnerships between city and county. Incorporate other P&R entities.
 - That has been discussed.
- Other leagues have to pay – soccer, tennis, etc. P&R staff clean up after them and maintain facilities. What would happen if suddenly disc golf required payment? What about tiered pay?
 - That would have a huge impact on people wanting to play disc golf. 95% of players are casual and will not pay to play. They'll find other facilities or make their own in the woods. Some people may pay for well maintained courses. Colorado has a nice course in north Durango that is nice enough that people might pay to use it.
- I don't know the parks real well yet. I've only been here three weeks. Are the disc golf courses rough or rocky to walk around?
 - A little rocky. There are other courses around the country that are made on more easily accessible places.
- The tennis program in general – I've run tennis programs most of my life – there was almost no tennis in Flagstaff when I got here. In the last four years we increased to more than 450 people including high schools. There is definitely an interest in tennis. A couple years ago we talked about indoor tennis with P&R, but it lost momentum with the budget short falls. Indoor tennis would be great when we have the money for it. My concern now is, as a contractor running a program for the city, now that things have picked up, at what point does the city – I've made quite a bit of payment to the city from the percentages of my program – where does the money go? We have holes in nets that need to be fixed, courts that need to be repaired. I've asked for signs because many residents have asked about keeping non-tennis players off of courts. I've asked for storage sheds so I don't have to haul stuff back and forth. Is there support coming for these needs? Many would be cheap to fix. We have people from age six to 70, men and women, we have a lot of interest now and need some support. I just need a little help with cheap fixes, some marketing, etc. The high schools don't have courts – they use city courts – they are official high school teams.
 - About ten years ago city was converting tennis courts to basketball. NAU converted theirs to parking. The support offered now is much more than 8-10 years ago. It is still an uphill battle. You have built a lot of momentum.
 - Tell us more about high schools. Are they doing anything now?
 - No, they just have teams. The teams don't feed the city – the city programs need to help the teams.

- There are also other entities within the city. FACTS program has a tennis program that is grant funded. Maintenance-wise, these kinds of things are easy fixes – signs, nets, sheds.
 - Yes they are easy, but nothing has happened even though I've brought it up. The city, whether it's ballroom dancing, tennis or whatever, the policy has been to support contractors. After a certain amount of years or money or interest, like any business there is the start-up stage, I don't think there is anything in place to reevaluate a program after it has gotten off the ground and looks like it has enough interest to maintain it. Instead of hiring kids, there might be full time instructors. There might be year-round indoor tennis. In Chicago, we gave more than 1000 lessons a week during the winter. FACTS contracts out to keep kids entertained, etc.
- Could schools be part of ten-year vision?
 - There is a need for a bigger outdoor facility for high school teams to run their matches. Since the schools will benefit from that, perhaps a joint city, school and private effort. There are ways to get grant money for that as well. Pool all the resources. The city needs to get on the same page for now and show more support. Then as we grow we need to continue that teamwork.
- The Senior Center is very busy and we don't have enough parking a lot of time. It's the same all over – the facilities are very busy and don't have enough parking.
- NAIPTA has grown seven times in past 2-3 years. Bicycling is huge here. Parking still needs to be taken seriously, but we need to increase other options. Any facility needs a bus stop and bike paths.
- I want to emphasize that everybody wants more or better. Those are important parts of a master plan, but my greatest concern is that we look at the basics of access to parks and playgrounds for every community and neighborhood in Flagstaff. We need to look at distribution and access and the need to provide equitable access to parks and playgrounds throughout the city. Then we look at the icing on the cake after looking at fundamental responsibilities.
 - We have been in a steady decline in pre-school and school-aged children. We've been economically pushing these people out of Flagstaff. If you want to grow a town you have to provide services for young families.
- My major function is permitting every patch of grass for sports related user groups, including schools and city property – no high schools though. The biggest need is there are more user-groups and users than there is green space. A second issue is some of the facilities. Fox Glen, for example, is definitely adequate in size, but it is one of few so we run into huge maintenance issues with turf use and over usage. The number one need is to convert some of those into turf fields so they are consistent, it would allow for more year-round usage. Lights are needed to increase use time (dark sky

compliance). We have more youth than adults. Boy's baseball and basketball and softball are always looking for more field space. Lacrosse is growing in popularity.

- There is no place for adult flag football in Flagstaff. On a Sunday we will drive to every field to find a place to play a game of flag football. The high school fields are always locked. NAU fields are sometimes available.
- We do not have a municipal golf course open to the public.

Planning

- Need to look at long range planning – five, 10, 20 years down the road. P&R is a key factor in the vibrancy of our community.

Special Events

- Scheduling events – we don't have the proper space for all of them. We permit about 400 events per year. We need places for events, preferably outdoors. Art in the Park is a pretty big one. Almost every weekend in the summer there are craft festivals in Wheeler Park. We need another and larger special event venue outdoors. We are short of an event space that would work elsewhere. Other events may move – Big Red Pour is looking for a different space.
 - People like Wheeler Park because it is downtown and green. Wheeler Park may be preferred to a larger space due to its location.
 - A lot of large events that involve alcohol, want Wheeler because it is close to downtown bars and hotels. If you put them somewhere else not in the city, it can cost more and is more removed from the downtown vibrancy. Businesses like having events nearby.
 - What kind of space would we need for non-downtown events?
 - Fort Tuthill is two miles out of town at the Pulliam Exit. A lot of large events are held there. Otherwise, Wheeler Park is the number one venue. We need a redesign to make that space more useable. This is not a new issue. We've looked at it a lot. We've talked about moving events and user groups don't want to do that. Buffalo Park is another large event venue.
 - Would another space add diversity or drain off of the other large venues?
 - We've got diversity. We need space.
 - Have you turned events away?
 - We maintain a calendar with closed days to maintain the park.
 - Do all of the events deprive people that would use that park for straight recreation?
 - I see people there all the time having picnics, etc. It is used a lot by families.

- There is already a redesign drawn up for Wheeler Park – Elizabeth has it.
 - There are a lot of events that could happen in another location. Elizabeth has worked with Karl Eberhard on other possible venues.
- The other thing that the community has made council aware of is the need for a second sheet of ice at Jay Lively. McPherson Park is a beautiful natural park next to Buffalo Park. We get requests for weddings and such up there. It's possible that the second sheet of ice could be a temporary or permanent indoor structure that doubles as a community event space. McPherson is one of the more frequently requested parks.
- Do any of you need volunteer help like at concession stands?
 - We got your name and will be calling you – thank you.

Neighborhood/Education 10-11:15 a.m. (15 signed in)

Accessibility/Neighborhoods

- As neighborhood planner, we need to think about all the neighborhoods in town and understand there are pocket parks and amenities for children. We need green shared space throughout the city. I would like to see all the recreational amenities connected more with FUTS trails and bus lines, etc. People need to be able to get from one to the other without having to drive.
- I am fortunate and have access to the FUTS trail the pond, the softball field, the senior center – I walk to all of them and love it.
- I like it here and that's why I bought my home across from Buffalo Park. That park is used all the time. I use the senior center a lot. I sold my car and ride the bus now. I use all of the facilities.
 - Do you use Buffalo Park?
 - I have three families living here. We follow all of the high school meets. I hike with my kids. We use all of the facilities in Flagstaff.
- With the city trying to reduce vehicle use, we need bus passes.
- The city can promote something like a neighborhood block party day once a year to get neighborhoods to interact with each other. Neighborhoods are so mobile now. People don't know their neighbors.
- Regarding FUTS trails, one of the greatest things about Flagstaff is the connectivity. It's great but it doesn't connect all neighborhoods yet. We need to connect all parks via FUTS and preferably not along roadways. We need to enhance FUTS trails and maintain them year-round.
 - In winters they push all the snow onto FUTS trails and sidewalks.
- Do neighborhood centers have senior programs?

- Most are for youth, but we'll (Cogdill) have some overflow from other centers who come to use weight room.
- Flagstaff recreation center gets a lot of seniors using weight room.

Funding/Fees

- I want to see the fees frozen until the economy recovers. People are saying the fees are a little high – people like families and other seniors.
- I recently stopped by YMCA and noticed their fee schedule and wondered why Aquaplex hasn't implements a similar e-funds transfer system. They might be able to see more involvement. The rates at YMCA come out of my account every month and I don't have to save up for a membership. I would like to see educational administrators take a pay cut to save programs like music and art. The administration has too high of a salary.
- FACTS is a great program that needs to keep its funding.
 - City does works with schools to put on programs such as FACTS. We try to work collaboratively.
- Can we also explore fees with county and city and getting them to be comparable so fees aren't the main difference between venues.
- How do we deal with diminishing resources and increased demand?
 - We've been doing more with less. We have Head Start at my facility. It is run by NACOG. Partnerships will become more important. We have the Sunnyside One-Stop which offers assistance looking for jobs, writing resumes, etc. We might look at the need for baby-sitting service if it becomes necessary. We have the I AM Youth group that looks for volunteer opportunities.
 - The food program at Thorpe would not function without volunteers.
- One of the things the city has been forced to do is collaborate more because of low budgets. As Recreation Superintendent, we focus on sustainability by collaborating with outside entities as much as possible. It has worked well and I see that as the future. The economy is defining that model.

Facilities

- I want to see more parks along Route 66. I want a picnic area at Fox Glen Park under the trees.
- My son and I stopped by here for Halloween, and I wonder if Thorpe Park Center could be for everyone and not just seniors. Bring the seniors and youth together.
- I live two blocks from Wheeler Park and I love the concerts, but we do have problems with Pride in the Pines and the Beer Festival because it gets loud late at night and messy – drunk people take bottles from park and leave them as trash. It would be great if they shut down earlier or watch the trash better. I would be glad to organize a neighborhood clean up after the events.

- Can we have volunteers watching the events to make sure they don't take bottle with them?
- Usually they serve the beer in plastic cups. Police are always at events where alcohol is served.
- FACTS uses parks for field trips. Could improve on – they just passed the alcohol permit law for Bushmaster Park. That is fantastic, because that park is not always safe. It might be a good idea for the other parks too. We used to use pools in town but they have shut down. We need more pools that are available and affordable – indoor pools. All the summer camps and families compete with each other for the pools we have. We do use a park for an event once a year, and we participate in other events.
 - FACTS receives funding from the city. I am employed by the school district. FACTS is an after school program and city centers also have after school programs – daily drop-in programs. The city facilities are used by school aged children as a safe place to be after school.
 - At a Sunnyside Neighborhood Safety Summit we learned that FACTS is being used less. It has become a fee-based program but used to be free. \$3.50/hour. City recreation centers may help take kids that can't go to FACTS.
 - Does city see itself as backup to FACTS?
 - No, it's just another option.
 - The free option is by default the backup to the fee-based option.
 - We service low-income neighborhoods. If we add fees we would lose users.
 - With people out of jobs, they don't have to use centers to watch kids while they are at work.
 - The city gives annual contribution for FACTS staffing, which has decreased in recent years.
 - NAU has stepped up with Killip School program. If we can utilize the recreation center, than NAU said they can bring in staff.
 - Killip FACTS is struggling more than other FACTS that are not fee-based.
 - City recreation centers are drop in – we have sports, games, arts and crafts. FACTS is more structured – it is a licensed child-care program.
 - Any police/fire partnerships?
 - Weed & Seed, La CASA (Citizens Against Drug Abuse)
 - What do you envision in the future for city recreation centers and FACTS?
 - City recreation centers would love to grow, but with the economy it is hard now. We want to be a staple in the community, a safe place

for families to do activities together. The facility is adequate now. We have enough of what the kids want to do and to get things done. We are really important in the community – safe havens – where people feel safe leaving their kids. Some kids are there from after school until closing. We don't provide food. Sunnyside has improved due to block parties, Weed and Seed and other things.

- FACTS does serve snacks.
- I'm at the Ice Rink. Because we just rebuilt it, we don't have good numbers on users yet. We are looking to putting a new facility in, in 5-10 years. We need parking too. NAU is bringing in seating for 500, and our parking cannot accommodate that.
 - What do they do now for parking shortage? Parking is lost revenue.
 - It's a municipal ice arena. It's a collegiate club that has grown in popularity recently. People park throughout neighborhoods. People park wherever they can.
 - In some places they can pay for parking.

Open Space

- We need to keep the city green.

Information/Awareness

- One concern is that seniors are becoming reclusive.
 - What's the best way to reach the seniors?
 - Through relatives, friends. I'm mostly concerned about those who are reclusive.
 - Is there a Meals on Wheels program here?
 - Yes.
 - Would that be a good way to reach seniors?
 - Yes.
- We need to find more ways to reach seniors. We need to advertise more.
 - What has worked well for you in reaching seniors?
 - A lot of them are here [Thorpe Center] during lunch, so we do lunch time announcements. There is an hour of social time before lunch. A lot of people browse the fliers and stuff on our front desk. I have not heard a lot from seniors about other sources.
- During events you never know which streets will be closed or for how long. Can the closures be published in the paper with alternative routes?
- Flagstaff Arts and Business Alliance can coordinate. It would be nice to have a huge calendar to coordinate events throughout the year. That could also help with coordinating parks and rides too.

Culture/Art

- Our community needs to set up more art and music programs. There are plenty of sports programs out there but not enough for art and music.

Special Events

- We permit more than 300 events a year at city parks. Not all events are appropriate for some parks, due to traffic, alcohol, noise, etc. We just don't have anywhere else to put them all the time. We put events in parking lots and vacant lots. We close down streets. We tried to address the noise level two years ago. We lowered it from 100 to 96 DB and over the last year we've been working with people to determine the appropriate DB level. It has been lowered to about 88 DB.
 - We are reworking DB levels and time restrictions. New guidelines should be ready this year.
 - Are there standards that dictate which locations to use? Would certain standards be something useful?
 - Absolutely. Certain events will fight being removed from Wheeler Park. We need other parks to be able to move them to.
 - When city permits, do you route the permit? Are there meetings to discuss transit, etc?
 - That is left to the event producer. They need to show how they will address parking, security, etc, as part of their application. If something doesn't seem adequate, we ask them to rework it again.
 - But they are just thinking about their one event.
- Fort Tuthill costs more and requires transportation be provided to drinkers.
- Buffalo Park has no parking.
- The city doesn't have to accommodate every single group.
- For big events, people will still need to get hotel rooms and go out to eat even if venue is not right next to those services.

Youth/Business 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. (5 signed in)

Tennis Facilities & Special Events

- Flagstaff has surprised me in the lack of quality tennis facility for a community of this size. The courts just across the street need some maintenance. If your child wants to get good at tennis, this is not a good place to be. You have balls coming through the net. I've seen users bring duct tape to fix the net while they are playing. Bottom line is we need to take care of the existing facilities. The city is not servicing tennis players very well. I'm an advocate of public use facilities. There could be more collaboration between NAU and the city. I've never seen a major university without tennis courts.
 - Is there an interest of a city sponsored adult tennis league?

- I think absolutely. We have people travelling to Phoenix in the winter to play. There are private courses at the Athletic Club. They contract out to NAU. I've heard that when schools come here to play they are not happy with the facilities. Their courts are multi-use and not ideal for tennis, particularly the flooring – it's rubberized and makes the ball go faster than it should.
 - Is that facility used heavily?
 - I'm not sure. I could always get a court there.
 - From a community wide perspective, the Flagstaff Athletic Club facility is a blessing and it's a challenge at the same time. It is the only indoor facility in Arizona. That's the only place to play during the winter. It's not used as much in the summer because people want to play outdoors and the courts are better. I officiate team matches and you cannot always tell if the ball is in or out because it slides and moves too fast. It originally had a soft bubble but had issues in the winter. Then there are membership issues – if you're a member of FAC then you have access and lower costs. Even though I'm not a member, I can still take advantage of that programming. It is not a good competition surface. It was changed to make it multi-use. It's actually referred to as the multi-plex because it was not cost effective to maintain it for only one purpose. (I don't speak for FAC) Flagstaff has CTA – Community Tennis Assn – the purpose is to bring unification, to bring people together to do good things for citizens through tennis – exercise, things to do for kids, etc. We're filling a void that has existed for decades. The district has been very active in helping with grants and helping to move the city in that direction. It is a challenge to break down some of that diversity or division – it has to do with who is a patron at which site. Some people are upset about having to pay a court fee on top of a membership fee. (handed out a print out of a letter he prepared before hand). Flagstaff CTA is going through a cultural change. It is a new organization and we're trying to figure out the area, working with the district and communities, etc. Flagstaff Athletic Club, Continental Country Club and the city have professional trainers. At FTA – Flagstaff Tennis Assn. – we are letting people know about all those resources – trainers, courts, etc. We want to support the full spectrum of tennis opportunities. Working together to benefit a sport helps people and ultimately helps the city. The unification is difficult. The Bushmaster courts (two) have quick start lines – divides a standard court into four mini courts to let youth compete on a scale that is fitting for them. It is a great thing and something similar should be done at other courts. The high school tennis season starts in early February. They never had AI tennis – now there are three in town. NPA has a small team. It's not that there are not enough facilities, but there are not enough in one spot. Typically you need five-six if not eight or more courts for tournaments. One year we used three different sites to accommodate the tournament, which causes logistical problems with multiple sites to maintain and have judges for. I keep all the supplies in my garage and every year we have to set it all up. We have different leagues – they

- should happen at the same time, but we don't have courts to accommodate that. Country Club has four courts in one spot and two more sets separated. We have to go by what the players tell us – they don't want to play indoors in the summer and sometimes won't play indoors in the winter – it's mostly about the preferred surface. The most practical thing would be to add to existing sites rather than build new sites. Tournaments can be indoor and outdoor, but the same division has to play on the same type of courts. Court surface is the main issue.
- Court resurfacing is on a rotating basis depending on capital program. There are also winter issues with clearing the courts and potentially causing damage.
 - Would resurfacing the FAC courts increase the tennis use enough to make it worth the trade-off?
 - A lot of tennis players go to Sedona to play. Some simply will not play on the indoor courts. I would play three times a week here if courts with good surface were available.
 - There are larger events that we would never have been able to have (we cover five countries across northern AZ). Courts are needed throughout northern AZ. If Flagstaff could step up and do something phenomenal like creating the facilities to support the sport it could have regional implications.
 - Who would want to build the facilities and how can we leverage them with the city? Schools? Community colleges? NAU? Why isn't NAU recognizing this?
 - We've looked into that and asked about it. They turned six courts into parking with no plan to replace them. We got feedback that they plan to build a new facility, but we don't know when or where.
 - Weather is a big concern because the season starts too early for this area. They need indoor facilities. NAU is paying FAC to use their facility. They have an excellent tennis program – Division One for men and women.
 - How would you handle this in increments rather than all at once?
 - We need to build a northern AZ tennis center to be able to host the big events. It might be better suited for a warmer area, but it needs to be tied to business. Too many clubs are membership only and they can't sustain themselves. They have to have partnerships – NAU, City, County, State, and government entities and private entities as well to help sustain it after building it. Bottom line for me is a facility with 6-8 courts with half indoors and with a pro-shop and business entities to keep it running. It needs to not be seen as a competitive entity with other clubs. It needs to somehow bring those entities together instead of competing with them.
 - Start by allocating land, then build some but not all of the courts at once.

- The City has about 30 unfunded projects right now and tennis is one of the top five. For every group that says we don't have enough tennis facilities, we have other sports without enough. They all are in need of additional facilities and services.
- FTA is new here and we are trying to invigorate the interest.
- I don't think it can work without NAU's participation. Tennis has more longevity than other sports – people do them for their life instead of just when they are younger.

Open Space/Culture & Arts 1:15 – 2:30 p.m. (16 signed in)

Funding/Fees

- Is any of this age-oriented? Do we know in the community the breakdown of different age groups?
 - The money allocations are not broken down by age-groups. The goal of the plan is to look at all groups and see what they need. Many programs cut across all ages.
- Budgetary problems are getting pretty significant. A lot of us could do more volunteering.
 - Parks Dept has huge volunteer support.
- Maybe get organizations to volunteer on clean-up efforts.

Facilities

- Where we eat our lunch [Thorpe Center] they did not put in sound insulation and it's very important that we are able to hear. Places can accommodate that need. Seniors talk louder because of loss of hearing and then it can be even worse.
 - How is this senior center for you?
 - I think it's great. I give a lot of credit to Kathy Brown. She goes out of her way to give us good meals.
 - The senior meal program is run by the county. The senior center is a city facility.
 - How does Meals on Wheels find the people they serve?
 - Meals on Wheels gets referrals from area agency on aging.
- Are any park spaces in danger of losing their status?
 - Not that we know of. It is not the intent of this plan to recommend parks being developed for non-recreation use.
- Do you have a completion date for FUTS?

- No. Three sections will be completed next year. We celebrated 50 miles of FUTS in the city.
- FUTS is under Parks?
 - Yes. It is part of the multi-modal Transportation Dept. We will integrate FUTS in this plan, but we don't anticipate redoing anything from current FUTS plans.
- I would like to see the bowling lanes protected. Can Picture Canyon be converted into a City park?
 - Picture Canyon - a lot of entities are looking at ways to protect it at the state and federal level.
- Thorpe provides a social link for people. It's a healthful place to come and exercise, but there are all sorts of things going on all the time. I have an aunt who comes through just to get books and feels at home here. It is a place where community is built. Transportation is really important, but we're not all in the loop. Offering meals is wonderful, it's part of the community feel. It's incredibly important for people to have an inexpensive place to go.
- As a senior citizen, I use the senior stretch classes here [Thorpe Center]. They only cost \$1.00 a class – wonderful.
- I'm a senior and an open space advocate. I use the facilities here [Thorpe Center], and our organization, Friends of Rio de Flag, has monthly meetings here. The staff does a great job here.
 - Do a lot of groups have meetings here?
 - We sell annual permits to groups that entitle them to certain number of meetings a year. For 53 meetings or more a year it is \$109 a year.
- Are there off-leash dog parks within park system?
 - Yes. There are two.
- People love the outings that used to be offered at Thorpe.
- Eradication of graffiti in park is needed ASAP.

Open Spaces

- I'm very interested in Open Spaces – Buffalo, Wheeler, Heritage Park – are there other areas that could be Open Spaces?
 - Are you interested in green spaces or programmed spaces.
 - I'm more interested in green spaces that are not programmed.
 - Are there places in mind?
 - I just wondered if there are other possible locations for greenbelt spaces for walking and biking.
- I really want to talk about Open Spaces – I work for Habitat Harmony, a non-profit that's been here for 10 years. We're interested in undeveloped Open Spaces and the protection of wildlife. I have brought copies of a vision that the Arizona Game &

Fish Department worked on a few years ago. I suggest that P&R could be a part of the implementation of this Watchable Wildlife Recreation Vision. (left copy with Leslie) It includes a list of possible watchable wildlife sites, some of which are in the city. It will be a multi-agency and non-profit effort to identify and develop as many sites in the Flagstaff area as we can. Many already have a good start. We hope to find more sites to recommend. For example, the prairie dog colony at the Humane Society. This would help coordinate the information and publicize it. This could be an economic benefit to Flagstaff in addition to wildlife and open spaces. There is a role for the city to be involved. Another area is 40 acres in the Fox Glen area that is city-owned. There are educational opportunities with local schools too.

- Does statement include wildlife corridors?
 - They published a study on that recently, but that is a separate effort.
- Friends of the Rio De Flag has a list of places they are nominating as best attractions. Two of them are in parks. We'd like to see the city and the community recognize the Rio De Flag for what it is – only one recent city sign within city limits identifies the river. Just recently the FUTS trail worked with another group below Cheshire on some willow plantings and put up a sign "Rio De Flag Greenbelt." It is a valuable asset to the community and we should preserve the open space areas and restore areas that have been abused in the past. Open spaces that are undeveloped – we have a list of city-owned property along the Rio that could be protected, converted into a park. I can email the list to you. Northern Arizona Audubon Society has identified a lot of birding areas along the Rio – 3-4 are the same spots we have identified. riodeflag.com
 - That list of attractions should be published in the "things to do in Flagstaff."
- I'm a member of the Expert Forum – a group of scientists that has helped the city plan for wildlife management. The city often does not have the expertise to make biological decisions. In order for sustainability for biology, you need to consider wildlife and open spaces. Perhaps under P&R they could get a full time biologist on staff – plan for open spaces, identify wildlife corridors, endangered species in city limits, plan proactively for wildlife management. The city should have a mechanism to plan open spaces and recreational areas to diminish conflicts between human and wildlife. The city has developed a number of open spaces with prairie dog colonies – they make burrows, which can be dangerous, so the city has been killing them. Eventually they will be an endangered species, so poisons will not be an option. Poisons are not limited to prairie dogs any way, it can end up with cats, in homes, etc. I like to see more cooperation and forward thinking about planning for humans and wildlife to coexist. That might include areas limited to wildlife and not humans.

- Participate when the multi-agency group comes together to identify the watchable wildlife sites. It's important for P&R to participate because they might need to maintain them later.
- There is a lot of garbage in the forest. We also have an invasive plants issue.
- Invite watchable wildlife sites – invite their creation and development and help notify the public.
- We'd like more collaboration between city staff and scientists on Open Space. The Expert Forum is trying to do that now. City should make informed decisions based on best available knowledge.
 - The Open Spaces commission was created with expertise in mind – it requires a certain amount of scientific knowledge. If there is someone out there who wants to be part of that commission it has openings on fairly regular basis.
 - That is not open to county though.

Awareness/Information

- Some ways should be found to help get information out. Some people get information at churches, social clubs, etc. Meals on wheels could help.
- What if there were some sort of a coordinator who is able to tell isolated people who offers shoveling and whether or not they are reliable. There's no coordination and there is a lot of isolation when snowed in. People worry about getting ripped off when they hire someone to shovel their walks and driveways.
 - Does Cityscape offer a referral list?
 - No – last year there was a web site called Snow News that dealt with snow operations. I believe it offered shoveling referrals.
 - Seniors call the senior center for referrals. I refer them to Hozhoni and ... Foundation. They also collect leaves, etc.
 - Is that something that aging services knows about?
 - Most people don't know the number for Area Agency on Aging, which is NACOG.
 - We need to know the scope of P&R. The nutrition program here is separate from the other activities with different funding. I don't know what we can ask for or expect.
 - P&R deals with programs, youth programs, programs at the senior center apart from meals, they maintain facilities, they plan for programs and provide recommendations.
 - Within parks related to Rio De Flag, put a sign up that identifies the Rio.

Accessibility

- I use the FUTS system and I would be interested in better connectivity. It's jarring to come off a beautiful trail into the city. The city is planning a pedestrian underpass for the railroad. Trails should be kept away from traffic.
- I am not physically able to use all of the P&R facilities. I would think the largest groups are children and young adults. Anyone who is disabled who still wants to use trails, etc. My concern is very limited. One of the primary things for people my age is socialization and transportation. There are various groups that play games here. Lower economic groups need attention too.

Seniors/Special Events 2:45 – 3:45 p.m. (23 signed in)

Special Events

- We don't have the facilities to bring in big events that would draw people up from Phoenix.
- Increase quality of life and work better with downtown residents and events.
- Very concerned about noise pollution. That issue needs to be part of this process.
- Walking School Bus with Thomas School.
- We need to think across the entire community about how parks are used and figure out a way for events and neighborhoods to work well with each other.
- We put on festivals here in Flagstaff and we like to work with surrounding communities on noise issues. The biggest thing that doesn't work for us is the long application process. Also, there are not enough large spaces for the large events. Every park is surrounded by a community so there are always issues to work out.
 - What types of events would you like to have?
 - Larger music festivals. Festivals with arts. To have more of a multiple event. Something that encompasses a great deal. NAU has incredible facilities, but they can be difficult to use in the summer. No food or liquids are allowed on the new fields. They don't let anyone on the grass fields before the Cardinals come. NAU does not allow alcohol sales either without permission from Board of Regents.
 - How tied are events to a specific downtown location?
 - We would like to do more. Wheeler Park was not built for events. It has to have downtime between events for the grass. If we had the facility we could have a festival every weekend. I would love to see a festival ground with adequate bathrooms, electricity, sound system, etc, that would hold between 5 and 10-thousand. The County fairgrounds are all asphalt and dirt.

- How do we balance the desire to have special events with this larger issue of quality of life? What are the guiding principles? The reality is we won't see any new facilities in the near future. We have to look at current facilities. How do we make decisions that balance quality of life and economic needs.
- What can we do with the county fairgrounds? They used to have giant arts fair there that was wonderful to attend.
 - At a music festival, we want places to sit on the ground. The fairgrounds need an overhaul also.
- We need the county and city to work together.
- One key item that if we deal with will relieve everyone is the noise volume.
 - You can only turn it down to a point depending on how many people are at the event.
- There are quite a few events in Wheeler Park that are extremely appropriate, like the small arts and crafts fairs, Wednesday night concerts. The huge events with towering speakers are harder for the neighbors to accept.
- It bothers me as a producer that the only park we have is Wheeler Park. We would like to put on bigger events. It can be difficult to get people to go to a different park.
 - In the last master plan there was talk of a Lake Mary regional park. What is the status of that?
 - It has a lot of issues. It's tied to the airport, to the Yavapai land exchange, etc.
- Are we sure a huge grass area in Flagstaff is a good idea? Are we sure that we want huge festivals? Are we sure P&R can take care of the big events and the big facilities?
- Regarding Fox Glenn, we do have competing interests with athletics as well. There are very few dates available at Fox Glenn because of the sports schedules.
- It's so much size, but frequency also needs to be thought about in terms of criteria. When there are no events it becomes a place for homeless people. If you live nearby and there are too many events, it can get overwhelming.
- We have several activities with Senior Games that require completely changing the configuration to put up different courts on existing facilities and we waste a lot of time and money doing that. Why can't the school system cooperate more with the city?
- Who owns the amphitheater? That place has grass and could be used. They have arts and crafts and cancer runs there.
 - The amphitheater is managed by a company. I would love to use it but the fees are cost-prohibitive. They have to approve vendors so that affects my sponsorships. All of our events benefit a local non-profit.

- The management company is not taking that money. It is a private-public partnership. The company earns revenue along with the county. It is set up as an enterprise.
- The NAU dome is good for concerts but not for a festival. It is very expensive too.
- There is opportunity for future partnerships between city events at Fort Tuthill. We are making some renovations there.
- Our special events are usually smaller and we have a hard time getting venues. Location is very important. An event at Kinsey was poorly attended but the same event at Wheeler Park was well attended. We need more access to the parks we already have. We don't charge for our Healthy Kids day, we ended up paying \$165 without making anything.

Culture/Arts

- I'm interested in the arts and how they can be part of this process.
- A lot of seniors who attend this center and benefit from the delicious \$2 lunch should be putting back into their community in whatever field they have or know. I teach bridge and Spanish here.
- An activity I was part of was putting artists in the community for a few months to get to know the area. They become part of the community. You have to work and publicize an item ten times.
- The problem is not confined to space but the quality of happenings and many different happenings that appeal to many different people. Schools are looking for art for instance. I know ladies who loan paintings to school and people just to enrich their lives.
 - What about in terms of the arts? For seniors or general community?
 - For the community. The art program here at senior center is excellent. Arts education is important. Availability and publicity are important for the arts.

Accessibility

- The aging population is growing and will continue to grow. Wellness and related things are very important. We need to plan for the future. We can be open to various events for the senior population, a population that is vulnerable and may not be able to come to parks. Transportation is a big issue for people housed in care facilities. Some kinds of events can be planned specifically for those types of individuals.
- We have had more consideration as seniors in the last two years than ever before. City and county working together has helped. I get frustrated when I can hear the noise at Wheeler Park and I can't get there. Transportation could be coordinated from the senior center for seniors to get downtown and elsewhere.

- Partnerships are key to the future. We have to be open to the fact that there is a future. We need to look at current locations of parks. Are they sufficient for people from all over town to attend? Not everyone likes to go downtown. Parking is difficult. We need to look outside. Flagstaff is spread out – do we have parks at all areas? The P&R Commission has talked about a sports event center because we live in an area where we can't be outdoors all the time. Different types of events for different people.
- Very often seniors don't want to go out after dark no matter how appealing events may be.
- Transportation in Flagstaff for older people is wonderful. The buses are very helpful. Connected with the bus system is Mountain Lift – they will come and get you at your house and take you home after the event. It's only \$2/each way.

Facilities

- Not all parks are designed for programming, such as Buffalo Park. We should have some framework within which the city can make decisions about what is appropriate and where so we are following objective guidelines instead of asking employees to make those types of decisions.
 - As it stands now, we don't have any criteria for content. If an event asks to use it and the park is open then they are allowed in.
 - Developing that criteria will be very difficult because of the competing interests. We have had some discussions about that in the past and they resulted in a stalemate.
- We need a pool with competitive lap lanes.
- On the last master plan I recall a given amount of acreage that P&R had and a national standard that indicated we were doing really good. But we are a very active outdoor town so the national standard might not fit here.
 - We will identify some benchmark communities to make appropriate comparisons rather than use national standards.
- When is Jay Lively opening and when is YMCA opening?
 - Both are open now.
- Partnering is very important. Look at special events in Flagstaff from a broader perspective. Include all venues in the analysis and encourage partnerships.
- Is there a place for NAU in this discussion?
 - They were invited. Please tell us who else should have been part of the discussion. We will probably need to follow up with some people to get their input.

Youth Sports/Adult Sports 4-5:15 p.m. (9 signed in)

Facilities

- Girls softball has not had much of a home as far as field use. They don't have good safe fields for us to use. I'd like to see some effort to accommodate girl's softball needs.
- YMCA has not had a home field either. The fields we have to use are often not maintained well and are unsafe due to holes in the field.
- I'm with the Continental little league. We've been fortunate to get use of the Continental sports complex. We definitely have the largest number of kids within our boundaries. We would like to see earlier access to the fields to carry out the required number of games to participate in the larger events. We have not had issues with sharing the fields with other groups. We might be starting a challenging league for disabled and handicapped children. We're not sure if it would run parallel with the other leagues or start later. There are three little leagues – the two west side groups combined. Continental has about 330-350 kids. Mt. Elden has about 140. West Flag has about 350-400. Little league is co-ed. A total of about 1300 kids are in the leagues. One of my goals is to bring the Flagstaff leagues closer. We brought the Mt. Elden t-ball kids over to use our field. Some of the schools are minimizing their junior programs. Coconino and Flag little league joined, and we gave them use of two of our fields. The field issue is more for softball.
 - What are some of the issues the other leagues have?
 - We've developed these little leagues with certain fields as a home base. The new comers just get stuck wherever. It's hard to displace the past users to accommodate new users.
 - They are city-owned fields that are associated with a particular league. They consider it their home field.
- A lot of the fields are specialized. A little league field can't be used for softball. All the different types have different needs.
- There is some possibility of using downtime on fields to allocate to different organizations to use.
- Middle league from spring to middle of July. From middle of July there is about a two week lull, and then at the first of August football starts and takes over all the fields. Then that goes until fall ball in September to November.
 - Do you have waiting lists?
 - We have to turn kids away after the total is capped. We don't turn them away for capacity as much as for timing – registering too late.
 - The other restriction is little league rules where you can only have a certain number of players before you have to split into another league.
 - We're very close to capacity.
 - When you have field ownership, they invest time and money into maintaining it. Girls softball doesn't really have a home. When they

get to a field that is in bad shape why would they spend the time to maintain it?

- Every season, after the season around August, the Parks Dept. laser level some fields, reset the pegs, redo the fencing, work on irrigation, etc. There is zero effort to maintain or improve their own fields when they don't feel that it is their home base.
- There are some nights that some fields are not being used. We want to partner up with softball leagues to give those fields to them for their games in exchange for caring for the facility.
- The leagues come in third for use priority after the schools and the city.
- A girl's softball field is a real facility need. Three to four would be sufficient. They could be multi-use soccer fields too.
- A dedicated softball complex for the girls would be great. They would have their own home field. We have sheets from years of different tournaments showing the city can make up to a quarter-million dollars on tournament weekends.
- Everybody's needs need to be taken into consideration.
- We have a good relationship between leagues and the city. We hosted a little league tournament three years ago, and I think the city benefited from that. The valley teams love to come up here to escape the heat. The Thorpe complex was renovated three years ago. There is a lot more youth baseball throughout the state. Tournament directors are looking for chances to come to Flagstaff.
- Kids are specializing in sports at younger ages too.
- We moved our soccer to indoor program because we can't get a decent outdoor field. We use our gymnasium. We pay the city to use the fields. The field we use sometimes at Kinsey has holes and concrete barriers we have to deal with.
 - Is looking at the Athletic Center a viable alternative?
 - They don't have fields.
- We've also looked at building our own soccer field, but the public is more interested in swimming pools or tennis courts.
- Tennis for all ages, all abilities, all genders. Players from age 4 to 70.
- There are a lot of courts in flagstaff. More are not needed; we need a facility where they are grouped together. Now they're built in pocket parks.
- We need a facility that is large enough to have an event
- League tournaments run in the summer. They would love to come to flagstaff to play in the cooler weather.
- High schools have no courts. The season starts in February. We need an indoor facility.
- NAU doesn't have tennis courts any more.
- All high schools, NAU, leagues, etc., can all jointly use indoor facilities.
- FAC indoor tennis court – management problem. Tennis junkies don't want to pay to use FAC. That's the problem.

- There are a lot of tennis players - 1700 youth, 500 adults - doing all this without tennis courts. Popup nets and foam balls. National Junior Tennis and Learning. Life skills class.
- Use NAU students as instructors. After school teachings. Mostly through FACTS. Afterschool is pay as you can afford. Summer FACTS is a paid program.
- Dream
 - Short-term, cover Coconino High School courts. Junior high kids outreach. Neighborhood is a perfect area for reaching out to the kids. It's connected to the high school and the recreation center. Courts already exist. Willing to do engineering.
 - Long-term, build a community tennis facility with at least eight courts, at least six indoor courts. Find a way to get the courts together. If we had a facility with up to 12 courts, we could run giant tournaments. I've looked at every court in Flagstaff, and we have about 35 courts counting public and private.
- The Aquaplex is wonderful but we need a longer pool – 25 yard minimum – for lap swimming and deep enough for diving. We need more swim programs for master and beginner swimmers. We have two lanes for lap swimming that does not accommodate the users. I'd love it to be attached to the Aquaplex. It shouldn't be moved somewhere else.
- What about stuff like basketball, indoor sports?
 - There is only one free public hard wood court.
 - We run all our games out of our facility and it is adequate. The hardest part is having a half court for not enough time because the city uses the school facilities for basketball as well.

Youth

- As a youth, what does the city do well or could do better?
 - People talk about going to the library after school to use the computers for school work. They talk about how they use city parks a lot. They have asked about more arts programs.
 - Performances are done in Theatrikos or in the Sinagua auditorium.
- Do most of your friends take part in sports activities or arts, or is it a mixture?
 - They usually do both.
- Where are they getting those programs now?
 - They are not getting a lot of art, painting, or drawing. There are art classes in school.
- Anything else besides arts and sports that youth need?
 - Most of my friends like science. We don't get the hands-on in science classes and would like to see more science programs with hands-on activities.

- How do you get to the games?
 - Usually kids won't go if they can't get a ride from their parents. A lot of people take the city bus after school. After school, during the summer, kids don't get around as much. My friends want to participate in the leagues but they don't have anyone who can take them to the games.
 - The city bus doesn't go into a lot of the neighborhoods.
 - YMCA cautions kids not to come without parents. YMCA can't send them home on a bus because YMCA is responsible for them until they get home.
 - FUSD has the same issue with transportation.
 - Maybe the city can use drop-in guidelines to accommodate more kids attending the games.
 - Those are kids we don't even know about.
 - Getting kids is not usually a problem because the parents of the athletes coordinate with each other.
- Are games timed to accommodate parents' schedules as the transportation providers?